

ico BRITISH DIPLOMACY BEFORE
1914

Edward Grey can judge, very averse to a war arising out of a quarrel about Servia. But if Austria attacked Servia aggressively, and Germany attacked Russia if she came to the assistance of Servia, and if France were then involved, it might become necessary for England to fight; as the German Chancellor said that Germany would fight for the defence of her position and for the protection of her own future and security." Here was the doctrine of the Balance of Power in its purest form, though the phrase was never used*

^hile Anglo-German relations steadily improved owing to trustful co-operation throughout the Balkan wars, Franco-German relations remained tense and Russia's relations to the Central Powers grew steadily worse. The appointment of Liman von Sanders to the command of the First Turkish Army Corps in Constantinople at the end of 1913 created a storm of anger in St. Petersburg. Though the German Government

^ave way, Grey's lukewarm sympathy was presented by ^azonoff, who resolved to put a little more backbone into the Triple Entente if he could. Benckendorff explained to his chief, in a striking private letter published in the Russian documents, why Grey had not been able to do more. Public opinion was opposed even to an alliance with France. Nicolson himself, who desired it, confessed that it was impossible.

A fortnight later the Ambassador added a few touches to the picture. He shared his chief's desire for an alliance as the natural conclusion of the entente. It was the general wish in British military and naval circles : it was represented on the front benches and in the Foreign Office. " You will be surprised at my conviction that Grey would do it tomorrow if he could. But he belongs to the class of people who rarely speak

about things till they are ripe/' The difficulty, he added, was immense. A terrible insularity still remained. Englishmen would only wake up on the eve of a tremendous crisis. The situation could not be forced. Sazonoff was wrong to talk of the blindness of Grey. " The menace of German hegemony is always in his thoughts, and he anxiously follows its advance. Do not believe he is blind. Far from it. He seems much more irresolute than he is. ... He feels very strongly that he is the pillar and the born champion of the entente to which his whole policy and his own future are welded." The approaching visit of King George V to Paris provided Russia with the desired opportunity for drawing closer to England. On April 3, 1914, the Tsar told Buchanan that he